

with the typical variety of the species. The specimens of both the typical and the new variety were collected and studied by dissecting floral parts. Except the coloration of the corolla and the basal portion of the labellum, no other morphological differences were observed. Therefore, this new taxon is considered as a variation in *Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm. and a new varietal name *Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm. var. *dilnavazii* M.R. Almeida & S.M. Almeida var. nov. is proposed in honour of Mrs. Dilnavaz Variava, Vice President of Bombay Natural History Society in recognition of her contribution to the conservation movement in India.

The main differences in the two varieties are as follows:

Costus speciosus (Retz.) Sm.: 1. Corolla pure white in colour. 2. Labellum with yellow centre. *Costus speciosus* var. *dilnavazii* Almeida & Almeida: 1. Corolla rose-pink in colour.

2. Labellum pink throughout.

Colour pictures of both the varieties which were taken on subsequent trips are given in Plate 1.

The rhizomes of this new variety have been planted in the premises of the Conservation Education Centre, Bombay Natural History Society, Goregaon, Mumbai.

Holotype: Goregaon (M.R. Almeida - G. - 501, BLAT).

Costus speciosus (Retz.) Sm. var. *dilnavazii* var. nov. similis varietas typicus differt corolibus roseus et corololibus basi non flavus. Holotypus: M.R. Almeida - G - 501, lectus at Goregaon, mense Augusto 1997, Depositus at BLAT.

March 2, 1998

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33. *ASPARAGUS DENSIFLORUS* 'SPRENGERI' ROBUSTUS - AN ADDITION TO THE ORNAMENTAL FLORA OF ANDAMANS

The genus *Asparagus*, which includes the edible vegetable *A. officinalis*, also has a number of species and varieties grown indoors for their attractive feathery foliage, consisting of finely divided and flattened modified branchlets resembling leaves. Indoor asparagus plants are commonly called asparagus ferns because of their superficial resemblance to the foliage of pteridophyte ferns.

As far as ornamental value is concerned, *A. asparagoides* (Smilax), *A. densiflorus* (Mayeri and Sprengeri), *A. falcatum* (Sicklethorn), and *A. plumosus* syn. *A. setaceus* (Asparagus fern), are some of the exotic species or varieties which are of common use in gardens and as indoor plants in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Reports on the flora of Andaman (Vasudeva Rao, 1986) reveal that *A. racemosus* grows wild in the Andamans.

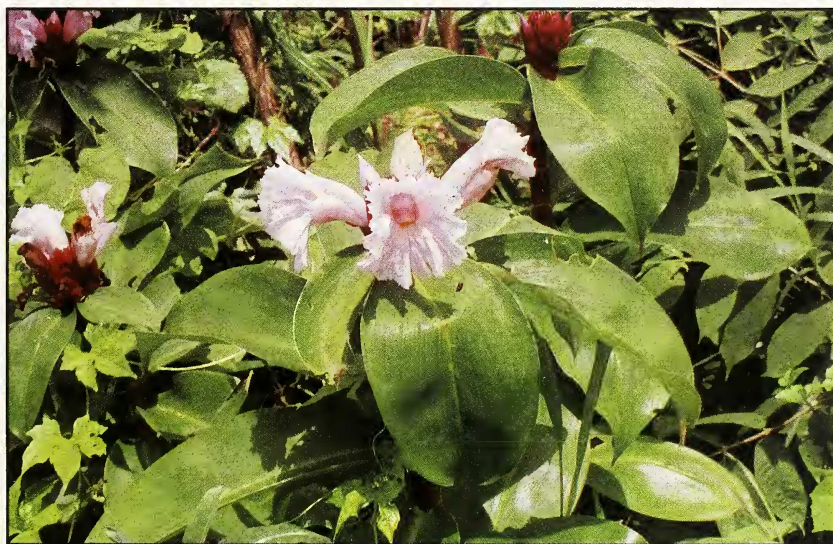
During an exploration of horticultural flora of Andamans, *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Sprengeri' Robustus was found growing wild on rocks in forests of Mundapahar, Chidyatappu, South Andaman. The present report on the occurrence of this species in the islands is of great phytogeographical as well as floristic interest.

Specimen examined: South Andaman Mundapahar, Chidyatappu on rocks near the seashore.

The plant is of strong growing habit and has pliable drooping stems, about a metre long. The stems are lightly covered with 1-1.5 cm long, soft, needle-like branchlets which usually grow in groups of 4-5 at the node. The colour of foliage is dull green. The stem near the joint of branchlets or below that bears small (0.5 cm) thorns. The plant bears 4-5 clumps at the base.



Costus speciosus (Retz.) Sm.



Costus speciosus var. *dilnavazii* Almeida & Almeida

Since these plants are found growing very near the seashore at Mundapahar, it is also assumed that they may be an exotic introduction brought in long ago which escaped from gardens and naturalised. *Asparagus* species with horticultural scope are widely cultivated in tropics and sub-tropics for the appealing floristic shape and form. This economically and

horticulturally important species could probably be a promising genetic resource.

March 18, 1998

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REFERENCE

Vasudeva Rao, M.K. (1986). A preliminary report on the Angiosperms of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. *Econ. Tax. Bot.* 8(1): 107-184.

34. *POA HARAE* RAJB. (POACEAE): A NEW RECORD FOR INDIA

(With one text-figure)

During recent plant explorations in the alpine zone of Garhwal Himalaya, some interesting specimens of *Poa* L. were collected. After thorough checking of literature and consultation of Herbaria at Botanical Survey of India, Northern circle, Dehra Dun (BSD) and Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun (DD), these specimens were identified as *Poa harae* Rajb.

This species was earlier described by Rajbhandari (1988), believed to be endemic to E. Nepal, however, the recent collection from the alpine zone of Garhwal Himalaya not only represented its westward distribution but also an addition of *Poa* species in India.

A description, and line diagrams of various parts of the plant specimens are given to facilitate identification. The voucher specimens are deposited at the Herbarium, Department of Botany, H.N.B. Garhwal University, Srinagar (Garhwal), India (GUH).

Poa harae Rajb. in Acta Phytotax. Geobot. 39: 55. 1988; Rajbhandari in THE HIMALAYAN PLANTS (ed. Ohba & Mala) 2: 205-206. 1991.

Perennial, tall, tufted grass, with stoloniferous base. Culms terete, erect, 20-40 x 0.1-0.15 cm, minutely scabrous below the panicle; nodes 2-3. Leaf blades flat, linear,

acuminate, 8-12 x 0.1-0.15 cm, nerves and margins minutely scabrid; Sheaths 6-10 cm long, glabrous; ligules oblong, acute, 2.6-3 mm long. Panicles oblong, 4.5-9 x 0.8-1.5 cm; branches spreading; axis terete, scabrid; lower branches 2-5, scabrid; pedicels scabrid; spikelets mostly proliferating. Normal spikelets elliptic, 4-5 mm long, with 2-3 florets. Lower glumes lanceolate, acute, 3.2 mm long, 3-nerved, glabrous, with scabrid keel on the upper part; Upper glumes elliptic, acute, 4 mm long, 3-nerved, glabrous, with scabrid keel above. Rhachillas 0.8-1 mm long, smooth. Callus glabrous. Lowest lemmas elliptic-lanceolate, acute, 4.2 mm long, minutely scabrid on surface, margins hyaline, keel ciliate on lower part to the middle, scabrid above, marginal nerves ciliate on lower part. Paleas elliptic-oblong, 3.5 mm long, outer surface glabrous, with scabrid keels. Anthers 1.1-1.5 mm long.

F1. & Fr.: Aug.-Sept.

Habitat: Along crevices, rock shelters, of moist alpine glacier zones, 4600-4800 m, Gaumukh (Uttarkashi).

Distribution: E. Nepal, India, NW Himalaya; in moist habitats of alpine meadows or along glaciers.